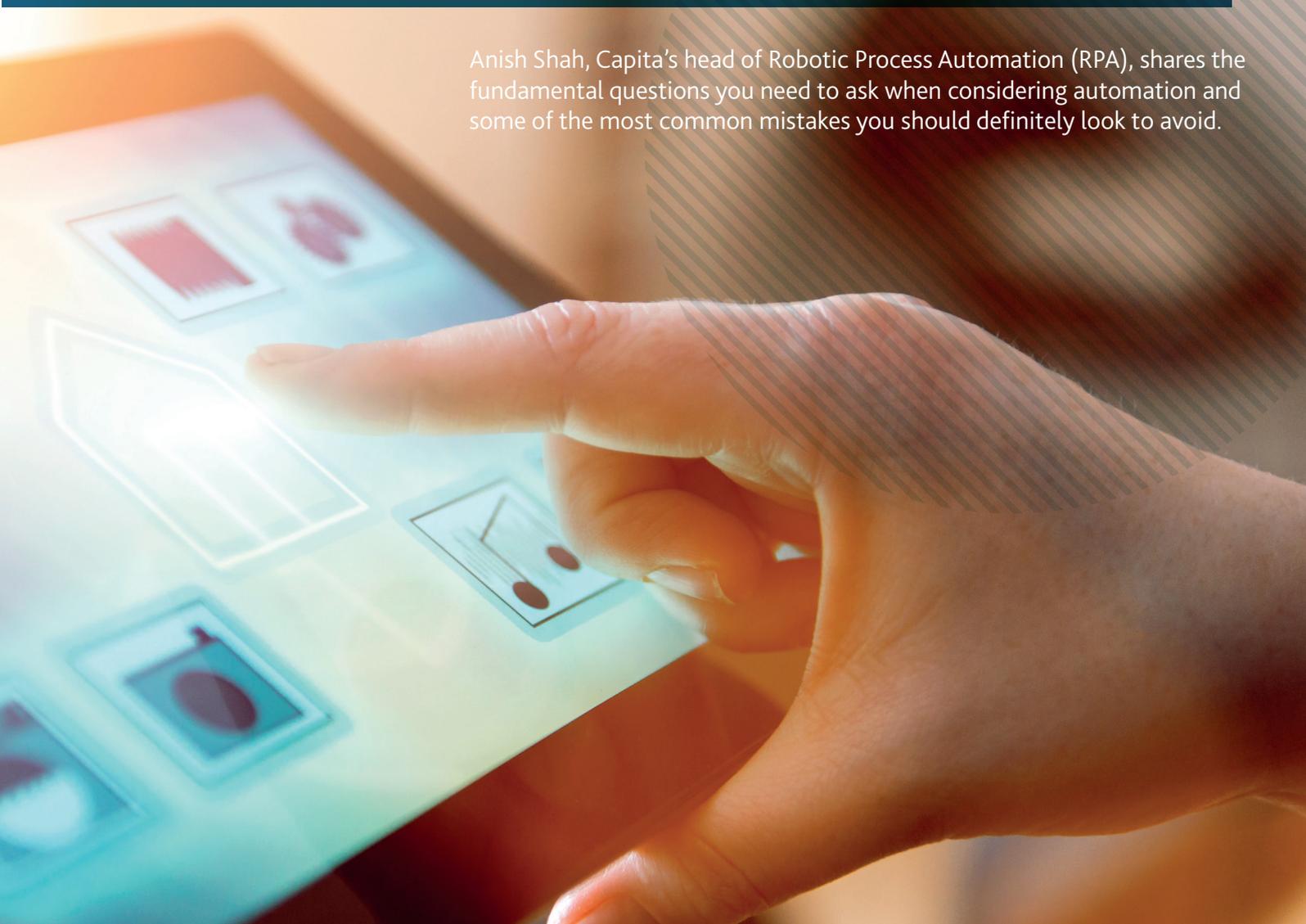


Manager's guide:

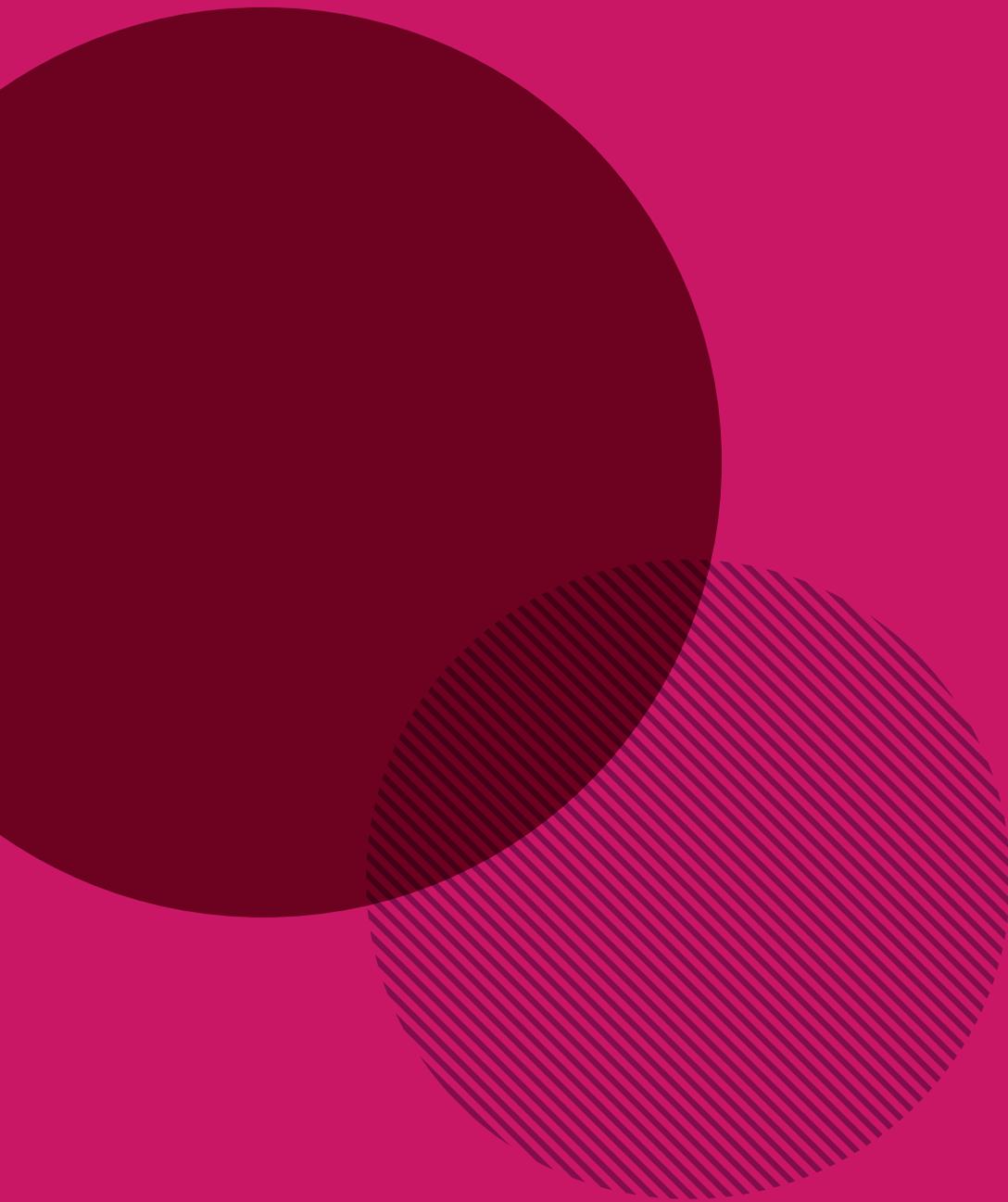
The questions you should ask when exploring automation

Anish Shah, Capita's head of Robotic Process Automation (RPA), shares the fundamental questions you need to ask when considering automation and some of the most common mistakes you should definitely look to avoid.



Q1:

How can I tell if my business will benefit from automation?



Generally, automation itself is a bit of an eye-opener for most organisations.

They may have attempted it before but with mixed success and often their perception of the level of benefits automation and RPA can provide are quite far-fetched.

Organisations generally embark on RPA to reduce cost but then continue it because of the governance and control benefits it brings. It's about the quality and effectiveness of activities and processes, and the level of customer service you can offer to your clients. These are things that can be harder to do through more traditional transformation programmes.

The key thing for organisations to understand is how to identify processes that can be automated.

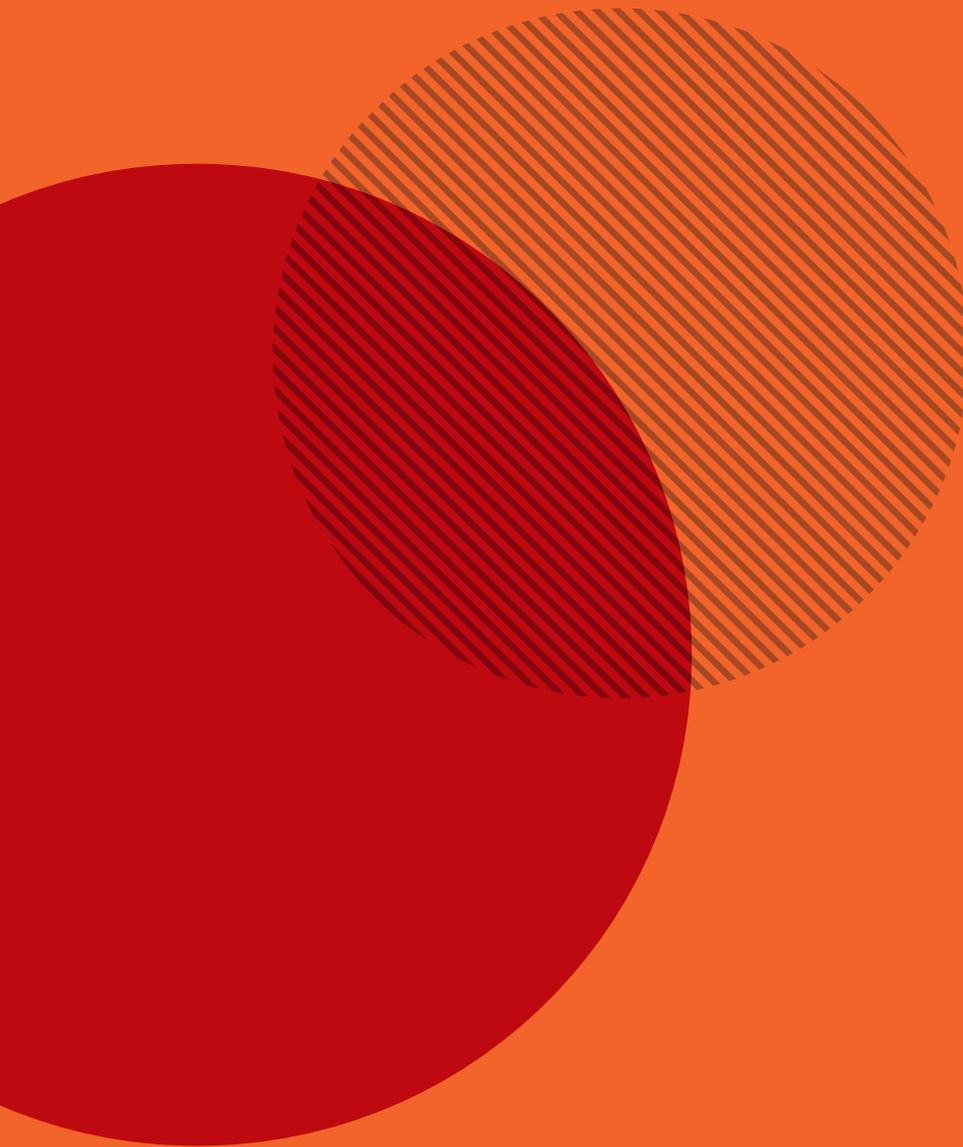
The biggest piece of advice I would give is don't consider your world as a set of processes, consider it as a set of activities. Many activities make a process. Look at your operational footprint across back, middle and front office, and identify all the activities that are transactional, rule-based, repetitive and high volume. Once you find activities that tick these boxes, you then have a long list of good opportunities you can prioritise.

Automation can drive efficiencies in several activities within a process so you will get a more efficient function overall. And don't be surprised if you come across tasks that are being done due to historical reasons or through inherited practices from existing teams. Robotics allows you to challenge that and support a standardisation agenda.

Another key thing to bear in mind is that automation is not just about replacing human activities with robotic ones, but about how you can support people in their jobs. For example, HMRC uses assisted automation, and that's not about automating the process end-to-end, but about helping their customer service agents provide a better customer experience to their clients.

Q2:

What are the most common mistakes I need to avoid?



A common misperception is that automation means you can remove your back office completely. That's not the case. Part of the back office, yes, but the entire back office, definitely not.

Another misconception is that automation is a panacea that's going to solve all of your problems and make everything faster and simpler. No, it's not. It should be part of a transformational toolkit that encompasses people, process, technology and governance, and it can deliver a step change in your operating model.

What often catches organisations out is scaling up a successful RPA pilot and it's not unusual to see inertia in driving automation across an organisation. In some cases, it's the organisational structure that prevents the drive, or it's the proverbial 'make or buy' decision. There can also be a debate about whether this is a business or an IT initiative. We believe it is business-led, supported by IT. Whatever option you choose will depend on the kind of organisation you are, the level of change you're looking for and the degree of commitment from your leadership.

I've never seen an organisation that's had a successful pilot then turn down the opportunity to do more. The case for change is very compelling and the benefits so significant that it's hard to ignore.

Q3:

How do I successfully embed automation within my organisation?



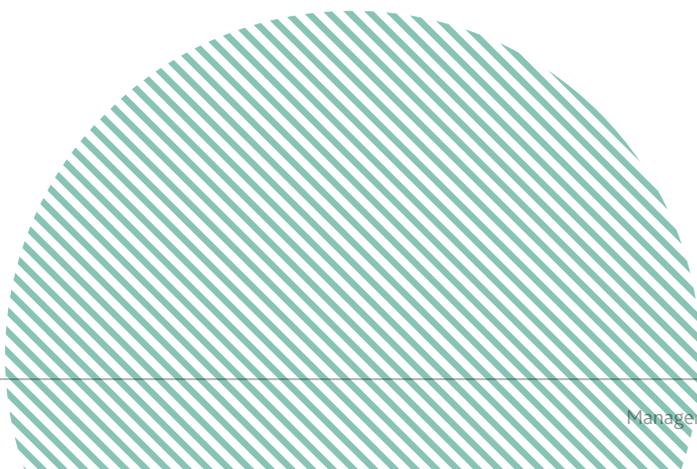
Where organisations can often struggle is finding the right operating model to implement automation; what's the ideal RPA blueprint for their business?

It's all very new and they don't know how to manage it. Should they build capabilities, buy capabilities or do a hybrid?

Once a pilot is successful, then depending on the size and scale of the opportunity, you should always evaluate a Centre of Excellence (CoE) model. It should include two key roles of Business Analyst and Technical Analyst, with an option for Hosting and Robot Management. This gives a focus that can drive automation opportunities across your organisation.

For example, a global bank had several teams across the organisation, each piloting RPA, each having a successful outcome. There were pockets of teams around the world all experimenting and saving money. But because it was not centrally governed and tracked, the benefits were not visible. The other challenge to this model is that you are potentially underutilising the capacity of your robots.

Drive RPA centrally, with the right governance, and you have control over what's being implemented, what's being prioritised and how the benefits are being tracked.



Q4:

What are the major
developments
I should be keeping
on top of in the next
few years?



Over time, organisations have attempted to centralise and standardise, they've looked at shared services, then at outsourcing, then at GBS (Global or Group Business Services) all with the aim of reducing costs and improving the quality of processing.

Now, it's about automation and simplification because organisations have 'been there and done that' with low cost locations and driving process standardisation.

Robotic Process Automation offers an opportunity for organisations to drive significant cost savings within a short time frame. Coupled with technical solutions such as chatbots, apps etc, they can also take customer service to the next level.

Over the next two to three years look out for:

- ▶ Robotic Process Automation software will embed Natural Language Processing and elements of AI. That will mean whole swathes of activities that are currently out of RPA's scope will become part of how organisations will deliver service.
- ▶ The cost of implementing an Artificial Intelligence solution – which is the utopia for RPA – will become much more competitive. At the moment, it's prohibitive for many, but as the cost falls, there will be a shift towards adopting this technology – cognitive computing, reasoning, learning and so on.
- ▶ There will be a fundamental shift in the skills required of your workforce. You'll no longer need people who 'know the rules', you'll need people who can interrogate data, understand it and spot trends that will help the business grow. Most other activities will be automated and generated by a AI or RPA tools.

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